

THE DULCIMER PLAYERS NEWS

75¢

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 7 * NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1975

HAMMERED * PLUCKED * SONGS * N' OTHER STUFF



Roger Nicholson



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Please address all correspondence to:
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Please do keep those wonderful cards and letters coming our way. What you read in the D.P.N. comes, in the main, from you the readers and we love to correspond with one and all about dulcimering - it's what makes the D.P.N. YOUR information magazine. We answer all mail on a 'same day as recieved' basis as a usual policy. We also assume (unless told otherwise, or for personal mail) that its ok to publish any part of any material sent into the D.P.N. - however, we will usually ask for your specific permission beforehand so that no difficulties arise. LOVE to hear from ya' !!

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- DPN Reprint #1 "Frailing the Dulcimer" Vol. 1, No. 1.
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(D.P.N. Reprints are 25¢ each plus 25¢ postage per order)

Looking for a builder in your area??? Drop us a line and we'd be glad to send you the names of any dulcimer builders we know of in your area. Due to our huge correspondence load, and resulting large postage bill, we are always grateful to those who can enclose a stamp or envelope for replies. Always glad to help with your questions if we are able, or find you some source for it if we are not.

Dear Readers:

Many thanks are due again to the many contributors of the articles and information contained in this issue. The reader should note that these folks have all freely and generously given their time, consideration, effort, and patience to help make this issue our biggest yet. The result of this effort helps us to finish off our first full year's effort at D.P.N. on a continually improving and expanding note.

Although the D.P.N. is not a 'formally' set up 'non-profit organization', things seem to thankfully work out that way none-the-less, and the D.P.N. is quite comfortable, both philosophically and editorially, by having things work out this way. And "this way" means that we can remain open about the content of the D.P.N. and not be forced into any political-type positions. The D.P.N. supports itself entirely on the subscription of its readership - and that is something for the reader to be proud of: a self-supporting publication. The oral tradition of "passing on the word" has been responsible for much of our growth and that's something else you readers can be proud of: you've proved again that the oral folk tradition really works in the real sense of the term.

Dave Taylor (1715 Canton Dr. #2, Bowling Green, KY 42101), a D.P.N. contributing hammered dulcimer Editor, continues to do a great job in helping to bring h.d. info to our pages. We'll be seeing some of his results in upcoming issues, along with his regular column "HAMMERED NOTES". This instrument sure is getting popular, and all of the h.d. builder's I've talked with are keeping pretty busy at it.

Our next issue will be a big one to mark our 1st Anniversary. Just to help elucidate how much we've grown, consider that our first issue (mimeographed sheet) cost \$25 to print and mail (150 copies); while the next issue will cost in the neighborhood of \$600.00 and have a circulation of 2,000 copies (photo offset printed) - unbelievable HUH!!

The D.P.N. offers it's thanks to those patient readers who have put up with our many mistakes and suffered our growing pains along with us. Most sincere thanks are also due to those many many readers who have turned us on to their friends, who have in turn become our friends. It's been a very warm and heartening experience for this editor and mere words can't convey enough love and thanks to you all!! If you are a new reader, we would value your support in our efforts to swap a flow of information about the dulcimer - which is what we are all about.

All you folks who sent in photos for this issue, or articles which arrived too late, can look forward to them appearing in our next Big Anniversary Issue. Keep 'em coming. We'll get them all printed sooner or later.

HARMONY,

Phil Mason Editor

COVER STORY

Roger Nicholson of England is the subject of this month's D.P.N. cover. Roger has been pretty much totally involved with the dulcimer since his 1967 introduction to the instrument at the 1st Keele Folk Festival.

Roger is into many facets of music; performing, writing, composing, and creative as well as scholarly pursuits involving the dulcimer. There is no question that since taking up the dulcimer Roger has developed into one of the most expert players in the world today - a grand inspiration for many, many players. Evidence of Roger's fine playing, both early music and traditional pieces, as well as original compositions, can be heard on his two currently available record albums "Nonesuch for Dulcimer" and "Gentle Sounds of the Dulcimer". Roger is currently working on a third (and last he says) album which should be available in the near future.

The D.P.N. is mighty grateful to Roger Nicholson for all his many fine contributions to our pages; and for his being almost singlehandedly responsible for helping to add many new readers from the European continent to the ever growing D.P.N. subscription list.

• REMEMBRANCE OF A TRIBUTE •

— By Robert Rodriquez —

When the final reviews and comments upon the 1974 Fox Hollow Festival have all been weighed, pondered, and measured for result and effect, no doubt there will be as many thoughts and opinions as to the chief points of festival interest as those expressing those same thoughts. This is not then a review of Fox Hollow 1975 - others more capable than myself will do such post-mortems, but present here just a few afterthoughts upon what I believed to have been, at least for me, the most moving point of the festival. I am, of course, referring to the Sunday night concert, and specifically to that period of the concert held later in the evening when a special tribute was held in honor and in memory of the late Chet Parker, dean of modern hammer dulcimer players who had passed away several months earlier in this year of 1975. The tribute was especially moving and meaningful because it was not just a tribute of sorts or in the usual manner of such events - it was much more - in fact, it was as if a group of very devoted and wonderful friends had been gathered around a livingroom and were discussing the passing of a loved one; in the case of Chet Parker, it was not only his memory which was being sorely missed, but his beloved hammer dulcimer music and the sounds which it generated for all those years when Chet Parker was synonymous with the very mention of the words hammer dulcimer, and vice versa.

Participants in this tribute were Bill Spence, Ed Trickett, Howie Mitchell, Jay Round, and Buck Matthews; in the case of Jay Round and Buck Matthews the tribute perhaps meant something even more because of their deep and long-lived friendship with Chet Parker himself. It was the kind of tribute that brought a tear or two to the eye, a choking to the heart, and a sort of loveable tug at the old musical heartstrings; in fact, it was just downright humanly moving, genuinely warm, and altogether in keeping with what Fox Hollow was all about. The musical portions of the tribute were solemn and yet alive with meaning and affection both to the memory of Chet Parker and to his beloved dulcimer. Perhaps it was fitting that such a tribute be held here, insofar as it was Fox Hollow which first saw the hammer dulcimer in the person of Russell Fluharty from West Virginia back in 1966, and which for ten years has seen the hammer dulcimer bloom in all it's musical and folkloric glory to date.

Chet Parker came very much alive that night in the persons of those who knew him as well as those who knew and loved his music and instrument. Solo pieces, duets, group selections, rounds, dance tunes, classical pieces and composed pieces, fiddle tunes, all came to wonderful musical fruition in that one brief hour when Chet Parker was honored and revered by his friends, and others alike. All in all, the memorial and tribute to the late, and most lamented and long to be remembered, Chet Parker, was a most moving moment during a festival which produced many moving moments. Chet Parker is gone from us now, but his music, his work, and most importantly, his love for the hammer dulcimer will long live on after him - and happily and wonderously so for future generations to enjoy and remember.

FENNIG'S ALL-STARS ONCE, FENNIG'S ALL-STARS TWICE

A Review by Robert Rodriquez

Of all the hammer dulcimer recordings presently in circulation, perhaps the most intricate and intriguing in terms of style and usage of the instrument are those two fine recordings made by Bill Spence and his Fennig's All-Star String Band from the Albany area of E. Central New York. This is not to say that the other hammer dulcimer albums (Chet Parker, Jay Round, Gardner Whorley, and Russell Fluharty, just to mention some) are not good, in fact they are very good indeed, but the two albums produced and recorded by Bill Spence and his group are the most unique and interesting of all the hammer dulcimer albums to me because of the varied uses given to this instrument, whose roots indeed are as ancient as time and history itself. There are major differences between the two albums. The first album features Bill Spence on hammer dulcimer, Joan Pelton on Piano, Tom McCreesh on fiddle, and John Peterson on banjo, plus an assortment of extra musicians, including Lynn and Jay Unger on guitar and second fiddle, Jack Hume on guitar, and Walt Michaels on second hammer dulcimer.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE → ③

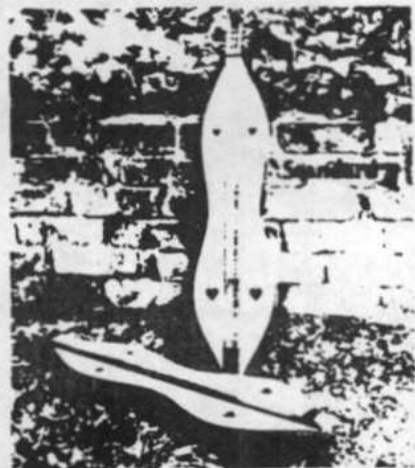
The tunes on this first album include everything from Mississippi Sawyer and Old Joe Clarke, old American fiddle hoedown tunes, to English and Irish dance tunes such as Flowers of Edinburg, Child Grove, Prince William, and tunes as varied as Gaspe Reel, Colored Aristocracy, Raggedy Anne, Over the Waterfall, and Golden Slippers. The album has only one vocal piece, Times are Getting Hard, featuring Bill Spence as lead vocal.

The second album does have some major differences from the first. Banjoist John Peterson is not on this 2nd record; neither is piano player Joan Felton, who has been replaced by Toby Fink, who in her own right gives Fennig's its own distinctive sound of the present day. The basic three of McCreesh, Fink, and Spence are helped out on several cuts by peddle-steel and bass of Jack Hume, especially on two cuts of vocal, Remember Me, and I think of You, both sung by Bill Spence with a nice choral backup. Perhaps the nicest thing about this album are two fine medley cuts featuring English concertina player Alistair Anderson on Margaret's Waltz and Wedding Day; also Rosetree, Green Fields of America, and Staten Island Hornpipe. Other tunes on this album include: Jaybird, Cherokee Shuffle, Georgia Railroad, Star on the County Down, Gallopede-Ruffy-Tuffy, and a number of other reels, jigs, hornpipes, and dance tunes. The important point to remember is that both albums are primarily to be listened to and enjoyed as good traditional folk music and as examples of what the hammer dulcimer can be used for when put in the hands of a master musician, which Bill Spence is and has been. He and his group have singlehandedly brought about the rebirth of country dancing over much of the northeast in the last three to five years, and his music and its effects are still being felt from New York to the farthest reaches of remote New England. Incidentally, both albums, Fennig's All-Stars and Saturday Night in the Provinces (what a title for an album - it should be given a Nobel Prize just for the title alone), are both on Front Hall Records, and can be purchased from Front Hall Records, R.D. 1, Wormer Road, Voorheesville, N.Y. 12186. (\$5.50 each postpaid).

The hammer dulcimer in recent years has come into its own as a true folk instrument, and Bill Spence with Fennig's All-Star String Band have done much in this regard; both albums are good, very good indeed, and are a credit to not only their music, but to the very soul of what this group is all about.

- END -

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BOOKS

The Dulcimer Book by Jean Ritchie - Tuning and playing - with instructional book. \$4.95
Four and Twenty Songs for the Mountain Dulcimer by Lynn McSpadden. \$2.95
Plus, of course, The Dulcimer Player Bible (\$4.95) and Dulcimer Player News (\$0.75)

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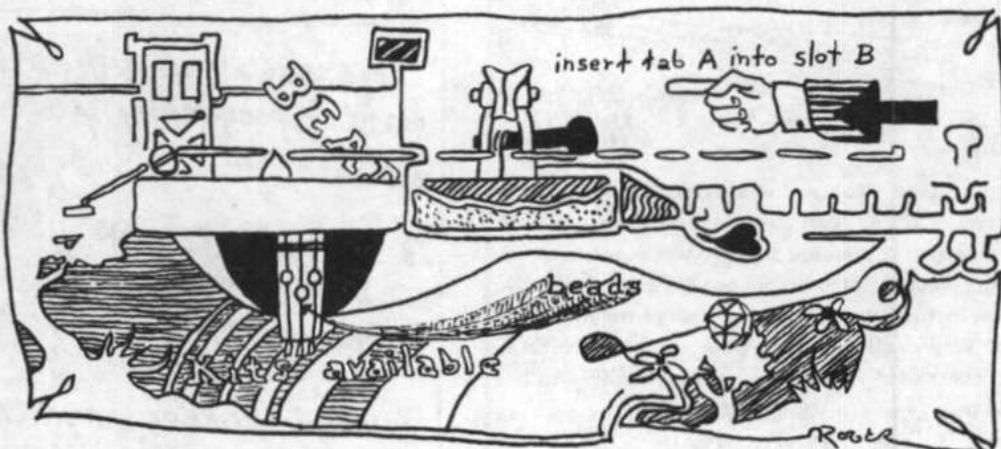
— by Roger Clifford —

You can make fine tuners from beads of all colors and shapes - some shiny and some muted, some many faceted and some smooth and round. Pearls for those with expensive tastes, ceramics, wood, and synthetics for the rest of us.

Are you having trouble tuning your friction pegged dulcimer?? Beads are your answer (beads with holes in them). Most dulcimers are already unconsciously designed for them too. If your strings stretch at least 2 or so inches from the bridge to where they finally meet the wood of the tailpiece there is a good chance that bead fine tuners can be installed without any alterations to the basic instrument. One must simply unstring then restrung the instrument with the beads positioned on the strings in that area between the bridge and tailpiece. When the beads are at the bridge end of that span their effect on the pitch of the string is nil. As they slid back toward the convergence of string and tailpiece they raise the pitch of that string as the beads radius gradually displaces the previously straight string line. Thus the friction pegs are used only to rough tune, then the beads are used to quickly bring the instrument up to exact pitch in an easily understood and affected linear fashion. The beads also add to the appearance of the instrument, especially if of the same material as inlays on other parts of the instrument, not to mention giving you something else to diddle with.

I've found that faceted beads work better where the wood of the tailpiece is hard and smooth, which is often the case, as they give much better holding power. But, if you are into round things in general, like pearls or even certain species of tropical nut-like seeds, then you might want to affect an abranding, roughing, or serrating of that portion of the tailpiece in question to prevent the beads from slipping during a particularly spirited number. This idea may or may not be original with me, one never knows about such things. In any case feel free to use it if your situation is applicable. The diagram below may help to elucidate the process involved ...

Happy trails to all, Roger



NOTE: Roger, a dulcimer builder from back before the revival days, has fine tuning bead kits available in prices ranging from 50¢ up to about \$3.00, depending on materials. See Roger's ad elsewhere in this issue for information on his high quality dulcimer kits (all solid woods, etc). Roger may be contacted at the following address:
c/o Masons, Route 2, Box 132, Hampden, Maine 04401.

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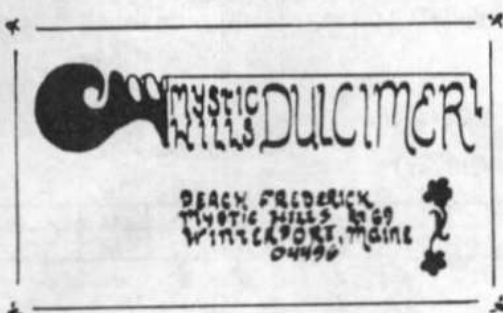
Those who played harmonica as youths and have taken up the dulcimer more recently might like to combine the two with the aid of a harmonica holder. It comes quite naturally. I have Honer dual harps in D - A, C - G, and B flat - F. Some models come in all keys.

My dulcimer is rigged with dual melodies but with #1 a fine bronze-wound .020, tuned an octave down. My interest is traditional dance music with major keys of D, A, and G. By tuning only the #4 string, and with the extra 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ fret, two keys are available; one starting on open and one at third fret, not to mention Mixolydian mode.

Alternately I have fun with flageolets in keys of B flat, C, D, E-flat, F, & G, playing along with records or radio. To get with the difficult numbers I find an endless cassette tape (Lafayette Radio) to be very convenient.

Yours truly, Byron O. Lowery
4 Carlisle Road
Bedford, Mass. 01730

P.S. I was thrilled to have seen Rick and Lorraine Lee's picture on the D.P.N. cover (Vol. 1, No. 4). Lorraine was my teacher for building and playing. She's a great missionary!



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THE UNEXPLORED LOCRIAN MODE

- By Neal Hellman -

Roger Nicholson quotes it as being "...Know as the bastard scale" due to the unevenness of its intervals, which starting on the 2nd fret would go $\frac{1}{2}$ step, whole step, $1\frac{1}{2}$ steps, $\frac{1}{2}$ step, whole step, whole step, & $1\frac{1}{2}$ steps, or $\frac{1}{2}$, 1, $1\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, 1, 1, $1\frac{1}{2}$.

To tune from the standard Ionian of lets say AA-A-D, simply raise the first pair of strings up $\frac{1}{2}$ step to A#, or lower the middle and bass $\frac{1}{2}$ step from A & D to G# and C# respectively. So you'd have A#A#-A-D or AA-G#-C#. From the standard Mixolydian tuning of DD-A-D, tune the middle string down 1 whole step and raise the first (or forst pair) up $\frac{1}{2}$ step (D#D#-G-D), which when transposed is just a reverse of the DD-A-D you started with, or A#A#DA

I would omit the 6th fret altogether and definitely use your extra 7th fret because here it really fits in. So this gives you a scale in terms of frets at 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10. Played on just the melody string it sounds a little like belly dance music and remotely East Indian, but it does sound eastern. Chording changes its complexion altogether and a combination of chording and just melody string playing can lead to some very powerful dulcimer playing. The following chords are written out for the A#A#-A-D tuning, to utilize them for the D#D#-G-D tuning simply reverse the middle and bass string (s) of the tablature.

BASIC EXERCISE FOR THE LOCRIAN *1

By NEAL HELLMAN

(A PART) By NEAL HELLMAN

(B PART)

(C PART)

REPEAT A PART



Dear Mr. Mason,

When I saw the mention of Blue Ridge Billy by Lois Lenski on pg. 27 of the July/August DPN and its listing as out-of-print in the Appalachian Mountain Plucked Dulcimer Bibliography, I did a little checking around since I am a library science grad student working in a library that has a children's collection (Drexel Univ. in Philadelphia) and thought the following information might be of interest to you:

Blue Ridge Billy was first published in 1946 and is still in print and available for \$5.82 from J.B. Lippincott Company, according to the 1974 Books in Print. It was also published as a paperback by Dell in 1967 and sells for 75¢. It is recommended for 3rd grade through 7th and is truly a fine book. Lois Lenski did research for the book in Ashe County, North Carolina and it includes several traditional songs including four from Sharp's English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians.

Also, being that I'm slightly xerox-crazed, I'm including a few pictures from the book you might enjoy looking at.

2.P.M. BOOKLIST

NEW NOTE: NOW IN STOCK 1.50 each + 25¢ POSTAGE (203 pages) Thanks, Anne Helen Ross

NOTE: The D.P.N. is looking into a bulk purchase of these books and will probably have them in time for the booklist in next issue, thanks to the info from Anne. Looks super interesting!

⑨

THE D.P.N. BOOK LIST & INSTRUCTION AIDS —



The following books and publications will all be found highly worthwhile and are obtainable from us here at the D.P.N. PLEASE ADD 25¢ POSTAGE AND PACKING COSTS FOR 1 BOOK OR 50¢ FOR 2 OR MORE BOOKS - THANKS!!!



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"FOUR AND TWENTY" by Lynn McSpadden & Dorothy French. Contains much playing info, plus 24 great songs and ballads for mountain dulcimer in both a tablature and regular musical notation. \$2.95 each.

"DULCIMER PLAYERS BIBLE" by Phillip Mason. Contains chording, tuning, strumming, picking, and much other info. A supplement book is included which contains the most complete dulcimer reference and sources info in print. \$4.95 each (a D.P.N. publication)

"IN SEARCH OF THE WILD DULCIMER" by Robert Eorce & Albert d'Ossché. A nicely done and well illustrated book covering much interesting info on some of the more contemporary playing styles (traditional too) that these guys have run into around the world. \$3.95 each.

"TUNING AND PLAYING THE APPALACHIAN DULCIMER" by A.W. Jeffreys. Super little book by a super dulcimer person. Excellent introduction to chords, tunings, counter-melody & harmony playing, noting, and strumming \$2.00

"THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN DULCIMER BOOK" by Paul Pyle. A great handbook on playing in the traditional strumming style - lots of tunes & tips \$2.95.

"TO BUILD A DULCIMER" by Paul Pyle. A best selling booklet which is small but crammed with interesting building info by Paul Pyle of Tennessee \$4.00.

"THE DULCIMER BOOK" (\$2.95) and "DULCIMER PEOPLE" (\$4.95) by Jean Ritchie. These two classics by Jean Ritchie belong in every serious dulcimer players collection. Lots of reference sources, songs, playing info, history, etc.

"THE BEST DULCIMER METHOD YET" by Albert Gamse. Nice book to get started on. Contains 139 songs and lots of easy instructions on chording, strumming, picking, and noting. The song collection (tablature & music) alone is worth the price. \$3.50 each.

"LIFE IS LIKE A MOUNTAIN DULCIMER" Neal Hellman & Sally Holden. Excellent book with chording info, tunings, strumming and picking styles. Also has a record included in the book of all the 36 tunes given in tablature. This book has some great dulcimer tunes in it! \$3.95.

"NONESUCH FOR DULCIMER" (\$3.00) and "MUSICKS DELITE ON THE DULCIMER" (\$3.50) by Roger Nicholson. These two books of tablatures and playing instructions contain tunes from Rogers two albums done in his great fingerpicking style. Songs and tunes range from traditional, original, and Elizabethian. Two very worthwhile books! A must for advanced and intermediate players especially!

"HOW TO TUNE AND PLAY THE HAMMERED DULCIMER" by Phillip Mason. This 16 page booklet covers information on the popular 5th interval tunings and explains some basic playing techniques (the h.d. is super easy to play) as well as giving lots of jigs and dance tunes done in an easy to follow tablature system for you to begin learning on. \$1.50 each. Includes lots of other information, sources, and references on hammered dulcimers too!

NOTE: Any dulcimer books not yet on this list (we are adding slowly) that you might want to obtain?? If so, drop us a line and we'll be more than happy to turn you onto a source for obtaining them if we know of one. The D.P.N. will also be happy to send you info on obtaining dulcimer records that you might not be able to locate locally. Always glad to help any D.P.N. reader with anything they would like to locate.

Dear Phil,

..... Got a McKendree Spring 3 album that has dulcimer on it. Decca Records DL 7-5332. Sort of unusual.....

Gaile Brenner



*** FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS (c/o Sandy & Caroline Paton, Sharon, Conn. 06069) has a new release out. It's FSA-53 "Songs Traditionally Sung in North Carolina" by BETTY SMITH. Accompanying herself on guitar, mountain dulcimer and psaltery, Mrs. Smith offers a wide-ranging program of songs, ballads and hymns drawn from her own North Carolina heritage.



Dear Phillip Mason:

I am in the process of making a 6-string (or whatever) dulcimore pattern as close as I can from a picture of Rosco Russell's dulcimore that Bonnie plays on the Russell Family record. I will take pictures of the construction as I complete it. Are you interested in this type of material? (Editor: "Yup")

You requested plans (in a back issue) - I could probably draw up something. I would suggest something very simple for the first plans so a beginner could have an instrument. I usually make sketches of all construction before I actually begin - fact is I have maybe 150-200 sheets of sketches, designs, and ideas. I could go so far as to send them to you & let you look them over for ideas and then re-draw anything you might want or run a copy for you.... What I'm really saying I guess is "What do you need and how can we help out here?"

Bless you, Edward E. Myers
Chula Vista Jr.
(415 5th Av.) High School
Chula Vista, California 92010

EDITOR'S NOTE: Needless to say, the D.P.N. is looking forward to hearing more from Mr. Myers in the future. Sounds like an interesting projects and materials. We are always interested in having more articles on dulcimer construction (how bout' it luthiers?).



DEAR PHIL:

WOW! you do answer fast. Thanks for the copy of D.P.N. - you'll find my subscription enclosed. Now for my big problem. There are seven of us who are making dulcimers and the problem is this: since most of my students are 11 - 12 years old I've had to do most of the cutting. In addition, their skills are a little less than I had hoped for as woodworkers. I am now faced with the problem of all these fretboards and putting the frets in their proper place. I have Howie Mitchell's book, which includes the 18 rule but find that with it there is still a lot of ear placement. Is there anyone who can accurately draw, trace, or scribe the fret pattern, with 6½ and 13½ frets, for us so we can trace them directly on our 28" staffs. It would solve our biggest problem and insure a better dulcimer.

(Dale is involved in dulcimers with her 6th grade school dulcimer club and the D.P.N. thinks its just "fantastic" that 11 year olds are building dulcimers!)

Dale Janney
3624 Oak Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21207

P.S. I think your magazine is just absolutely fantastic. Would love to see more on how to build your own. I'd like to make dozens.



**** NOTE *** Scotty Antes has moved Boulder Junction -- Scotty has gone into partnership with Dave Neff and from the NEW Boulder Junction Inc. they plan to offer a variety of dulcimer styles, frailing banjos, hammered dulcimers, etc. The new address is: P.O. Box 471 (13443 Cleveland Ave.) Uniontown, Ohio 44685. Scotty sells dulcimer plans (both kinds) and his home address to contact about plans and stuff is now at 236 Lincoln St., Hartsville, Ohio 44632

Lorraine Lee has been kind enough to send us the tuning chart which she uses in her dulcimer teaching classes (see D.P.N. teachers list). You will find the following tunings to be well suited to the light gauge stringing set-ups for dulcimer that Lorraine has worked out through her many years of playing and experimenting with the dulcimer.

APPALACHIAN DULCIMER CLASS TUNING CHART*

Always tune your bass string first.

MIXOLYDIAN MODE - melody and middle are tuned to 3rd fret bass - scale starts open

	<u>bass string</u>		<u>melody string</u>		<u>middle string</u>	<u>key signature</u>
key of C	G below middle C	C	middle C		middle C	no sharps or flats
key of D	A " " C		D above middle C		D above middle C	two sharps
key of E	B " " C		E " " C		E " " C	four sharps

IONIAN MODE - melody and middle tuned to 4th fret bass string-scale starts 3rd fret

	<u>bass string</u>		<u>melody string</u>		<u>middle string</u>	<u>key signature</u>
key of F	F below middle C	C	middle C		middle C	one flat
key of G	G " " C		D above middle C		D above middle C	one sharp
key of A	A " " C		E " " C		E " " C	three sharps

MODAL (MINOR) TUNINGS:

AEOLIAN MODE -tune mixolydian, then lower melody string one whole step until the first fret on the melody sounds the same as the middle string open - scale starts on first fret

	<u>bass string</u>		<u>melody string</u>		<u>middle string</u>
C modal	G below middle C	C	Bflat below m.C		middle C
D modal	A " " C		middle C		D above middle C
E modal	B " " C		D above middle C		E " " C

DORIAN MODE -tune ionian, then lower melody string one whole step until the first fret on melody sounds the same as the middle string open- scale starts on the fourth fret

	<u>bass string</u>		<u>melody string</u>		<u>middle string</u>
F modal	F below middle C	C	Bflat below m.C		middle C
G modal	G " " C		middle C		D above middle C
A modal	A " " C		D above middle C		E " " C

These tunings are appropriate for light gauge metal strings. From a set of strings for the five string banjo use the strings marked first or fifth (they're the same gauge) for the melody and middle strings - gauge is approx. .009. If you have a double melody string you will need yet another .009.

Use an unwound third from the same banjo set for your bass string (third string) approx. .012.

For a dulcimer with four separate strings (no double first) use a fourth from the banjo set, approx. .022, and tune it an octave below the melody string.



LORRAINE A. LEE

Appalachian Music

234 Eliot Street

South Natick, Mass. 01760

Tel. 617 - 653-8290

(12) * this chart is set up for three string dulcimers, a wound fourth string would be tuned an octave below the melody string for each of these tunings to provide a bass drone

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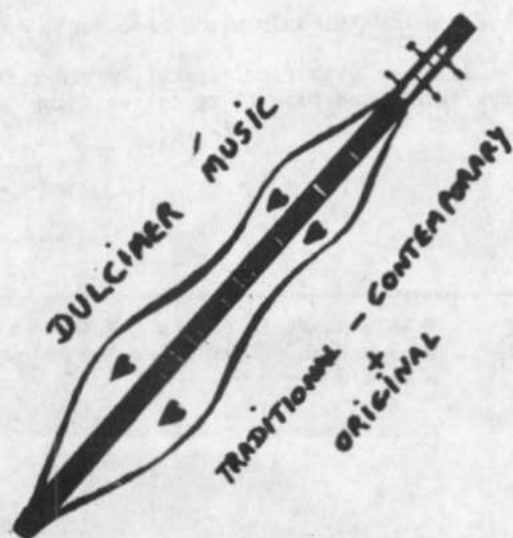
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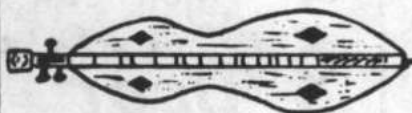
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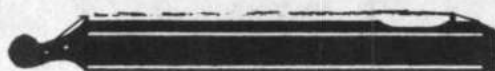
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most people

Dear Mr. Mason,

..... Did you know that Steeleye Span albums all have dulcimer music on them? I saw "Please to See the King" on your discography but I've also got "Now We Are Six" (Chrysalis CHR 1053) and "Parcel of Rogues" (Chrysalis CHR 1046) with Tim Hart playing electric dulcimer. "Now We Are Six" has three cuts with electric dulcimer and "Parcel of Rogues" has even more than that. I'm not really sure how many "Parcel of Rogues" has because it doesn't list the instruments each person plays on each cut, and some of the other instruments could be any of several.....

Sincerely, Anne Helen Ross
Bala Cynwyd, PA

Dear D.P.N. Readers,

..... Kevin Roth briefly mentioned electronic dulcimers. Well, its my belief that one of the reasons that the dulcimer has been left unnoticed so long is due to the fact that when played with many other instruments its beautiful sound gets lost. I would like to suggest that players look into a fine electronic pick-up designed by the Barcus-Berry Company. It may be attached to the instrument permanently or by putty (so it may be removed). It gives superb sound reproduction; even better than live miking because the pickup is in direct contact with the vibrating wood. The pickup may be used in conjunction with the Barcus-Berry pre-amp which has separate bass and treble controls. A really neat amp to go with this is one that stands 4" by 8½" by 6" and runs on six penlight batteries! Known as the "pignose" amp. designed by, believe it or not, the Pignose Company of Los Angeles. I know this sounds like advertising hyp, but its just that these products are so fine and reproduce the sound of the dulcimer so well, I feel its worth passing on. Thanks for such a beautiful magazine!

Dulcimers forever, Steve Katz
15 Royal St.
Worcester, Mass. 01602

Dear Phillip,

I would really appreciate the names of any Vermont builders you know of. What I'm looking for is someone in New England who would consider arranging some kind of apprenticeship. I want to learn more about making musical instruments.

I've built two violas with an awful lot of help from a violin maker named Gault in Wash. D.C. I don't feel, though, that I have enough knowledge and skill to work on my own. I have virtually no experience with power tools.

Lucky Diamond got me interested in dulcimers, and I'm particularly interested in hammered dulcimers. I'm also interested in fiddles and the banjo. If you know of any makers who are open to teaching others I would like to know about them.

Thanks a lot, Beverly Dyer
Box 229B
Bennington Coll.
Benn., VT 05201

***** While attending the Eisteddfod in late September Lorraine Lee turned me onto a photocopied page from "The Celtic Song Book" (by Alfred Percival Graves - Great Britain: Ernest Benn Ltd, 1928) in which this interesting paragraph occurs:

"The late Dr. Clague of Castletown claimed that there existed in the island (Isle of Man) a type of fiddle with three strings and a flat bridge and fingerboard; the two lower strings tuned in fourths or fifths formed a drone, and the melody was played on the upper string, the effect produced being the imitation of a bagpipe with a chanter and two drones. There are a few tunes which give some colour to this theory. I do not think, however, that such an instrument was in general use. Mention is made too of a primitive flute, made from the branch of the elder-tree, but its scale must have been very defective, so its influence would be negligible. There are no traces of the harp.

(Dr. John Clague, a Manxman, spent a lot of time in the late 1800s collecting and researching Manx folk song.)



THE KEVIN ROTH COLUMN

By KEVIN ROTH

Many thanks for your letters about the Radio show folks. It's being produced now and should be ready for the air in the Spring. Keep your eyes peeled in the D.P.N. for the date and dial number in your area. Keep sending those tapes - I will be using most all of them; and like I said in my last column, you will be in the best of company along with Judy Collins, Roger Nicholson, Richard Farina, Joni Mitchell and many more.

The next project on the agenda is finding out what a chromatic fretted dulcimer can or cannot do. A chromatic dulcimer will include all the sharps & flats on the piano. Frankly it will be somewhat of a pain to learn how to play the thing, but that's life I guess. Has anyone out there ever made one before?

On the more traditional side of life, a friend of mine proved to me that all the notes you want are on the regular dulcimer. She said it just depends on how you tune it. All right, I'll buy that idea, but I still can't figure out the tunings. Can you imagine playing "Go Tell Aunt Rhody" in E flat with a 7th added perhaps??

I am having an 8 string dulcimer made. The dulcimer is based on a 4 string - the difference is that each string is doubled and one each is tuned an octave below the other. It is based on the idea of a 12-string guitar. It gives the instrument a much deeper & richer sound. I use banjo 2nd, 3rd, & 4th (Black Diamond) strings, which should make quite a sound! Dave Field is making it for me, and knowing his work and feelings for the instrument it should be outstanding. Has anyone out there experimented with other forms of dulcimers - new shapes, sizes, strings???

Oh yes, one last thing before I go about dinner to those who love the changing of seasons and the colors of the Fall: I wish you all the next few months. Kevin Roth ** Unionville, PA 19375 - (215) 347-1808.

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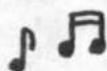
DEAR READERS:

Please note that the articles, columns and letters which appear in the D.P.N. do not necessarily reflect the personal opinion of the Editor. The Editor does not feel that this publication should take any specific stand (which always confines things to boundaries - an unnecessary philosophy when dealing with music); rather it is felt that this publication should be open to all views and opinion about the dulcimer. We surely have room to allow all to share freely in each others dulcimer lore and sort out for ourselves what appeals to the individual interest and direction. By your correspondence only can we know what you want to see in D.P.N. and what you would like to see.

This issue brings to a close the first year of the D.P.N.'s existence and we warmly thank all the many fine folks who have shared their dulcimer knowledge & music with us. We are continuing to grow at an amazing rate and look forward to another year of D.P.N./

P.M.

HAMMERED NOTES



by David Taylor

The period covering the last ten years has seen an incredible rejuvenation of interest in the instrument generally known in the United States today as the hammered dulcimer. Until rather recently, there were very few who recognized, much less played these instruments; by today, this number has increased significantly. While there were practically none produced for commercial sale, today luthiers from coast to coast are manufacturing instruments of extraordinary quality, musical as well as aesthetic.

In an attempt to complement the ever-increasing interest in hammered dulcimers, the DPN begins with this issue a new, semi-regular column devoted exclusively to the hammered dulcimer. It will be written by David Taylor, a graduate student in folklore at Western Kentucky University, and a hammered dulcimer player.

The column will hopefully be designed around specific needs of our readers, be they questions about building, history, availability of instruments, or whatever. We also have plans to reprint some articles from other journals, dealing with hammered dulcimer scholarship from earlier on, as well as to focus on some research currently under way on these folk instruments. If humanly possible, questions will be answered in the issue to be published immediately following their receipt. Queries and/or suggestions for a direction for the column should be sent directly to David Taylor, 1715 Canton Drive #2, Bowling Green, KY 42101.

The "Hammered Notes" reprint series begins this issue with an article by Charles Faulkner Bryan, originally published in the "Tennessee Folklore Society Bulletin" Volume XVII, No. 2, June, 1952. Bryan, a professor of music at the Indian Springs School for Boys at Helena, Alabama, was a significant force in the study of Tennessee folklore for twenty years, until his untimely death in 1955 at the age of 44. A more complete biography of this early hammered dulcimer scholar will appear in the next issue of the DPN, along with the conclusion of this lengthy article. The following article is reprinted with the permission of the Tennessee Folklore Society, and our deep appreciation goes to Ralph W. Hyde, Secretary-Editor for the Tennessee Folklore Society.

AMERICAN FOLK INSTRUMENTS:



THE HAMMERED DULCIMER



By Charles Faulkner Bryan

Several years ago radio audiences throughout the nation were fascinated by a quaint musical sound which they heard on the Ford Early American Dance Program. Everyone could identify the fiddle and the string bass in the group playing, but the peculiar accompanying instrument which sounded unlike anything known in contemporary life was the captivation which held many a non-dancer, as well as the dancers, to the program. A few old timers remembered the sound from long ago, while everyone else who tuned in the program made his own guess as to what it was. Unfortunately the program ran its cycle and passed from the American scene. Only the memory of that strange plunking sound remains, and no acquaintance of the public as to what made it come about.

The source of this strange sound was the hammered dulcimer, a complicated and completely original musical instrument. It may be considered a folk instrument, because it was never awarded the dignity of having compositions written for it, nor was it given a place in the concert hall. Although one of the most complex of folk instruments, it still lends itself to informal music and awaits the touch of anyone with a lilting tune in his heart. One look at this box, covered with many strings, is enough to amaze the lover of folk arts. Here is a physics laboratory in one neat package. Most of the instruments which can be found today were made in humble homes or shops where tools were few but ingenuity great.

The student of instruments must admit to a much clearer history of development in the case of the hammered dulcimer as compared to that of the Appalachian Mountain Dulcimer. With the latter instrument, the threads of chronology are spider webs and as yet not able to support the weight of historical requirements. We only guess that the plucked instrument was used in Elizabethan times. On the other hand, the hammered dulcimer has a clear history and much documentation in all languages. So far, its earliest convincing proof comes from a bas-relief on a cathedral porch in Spain of about 1184. It can be traced to all the continents and to most countries. In China, where it was first found about 1800, it was called the yang ch'in (foreign zither). Many writers have called it the forerunner of the piano; and indeed it could well have inspired inventors to mechanize this complicated box.

As in the case of the Appalachian Mountain dulcimer, the hammered dulcimer is classified by its string arrangement. The single-bridged dulcimer is a simple instrument in which the strings are passed over a bridge, after having been fastened to one end of the box and to tuning pins on the other end. The instrument-maker places a single bridge, or a series of bridges like chessmen in such a way as to permit playing on either side of the bridge. The player strikes the strings with hammers, and the sound is amplified by the sound box over which the strings are fastened. The single-bridged instrument is comparatively easy to make, for all the ingenious music-lover has to do is to prepare a strong elongated box, fasten strings to one end by screws, and after running them over one bridge, connect them to pins embedded in the other end of the box. The pins were hammered out on anvils and designed to be forced tightly into prepared holes in the hard wood. (Editor's note: sketches of tuning pin and tuning wrench available in original article.) Tuning wrenches were anvil products and were necessary to turn the pins because of the vice-like grip of the wood and the tension of the strings. In this single-bridged instrument the diatonic scale is tuned and the bridge is so arranged as to give two scales, one a perfect fifth above the other. The calculation for this double scale was not too difficult to make, for the old-timer simply measured one-third of the string and placed the bridge there, not realizing that milleniums ago the Greeks had first found such calculations of dividing a string and that the monochord 6th Century Boethius had set up lore for such tuning. Thus the player had at his command two sets of notes.

(To be continued in our next issue)

~~~~~

DULCIMER TEACHERS LISTINGS (We'll add new names as they are brought to our attention):

Lorraine Lee, 234 Elliot St., South Natick, Mass. 01760 (653-8290)
 Bobbie Wayne, 2118 Forest Ridge Road, Timonium, Maryland 21093
 Holly Tannen, 33 Lawford Road, London, England
 Maddie MacNeil, P.O. Box 157, Front Royal, Virginia 22630
 Eileen Rains, 333 Fayetteville St. #410, Raleigh, N.C. 27601
 Ralph Lee Smith, 1732 21st St., Washington, D.C. 20009
 Chelsea House Folklore Center, Box 1057, Brattleboro, Vermont 05301
 Tom Hobson, S.F., California - phone 626-8097
 Kate Christ, 4028 C.T.H. "J", Rt 2, Cross Plains, Wisconsin 53528
 Kathy Reddick, 39 Highland Ave. #3, Cambridge, Mass. 02139
 Ila Andersen, 7799 S. Turkey Creek Road, Morrison, Colorado 80465
 Simon Spaulding, 566 Chestnut St., San Francisco, CA 94133 (982-3846)
 Barbara Truex, 24 Branchville Rd., Ridgefield, Conn. 06877 (438-0266)
 John Applequist "Wooden Music", 25 W. Anapamu, Santa Barbara, CA 93101

NOTE: Books & records make excellent self-teaching aids also!! A check with any nearby Folk Society (they are in every city) or college should turn up a few dulcimer people in your area who would be interested in swapping tunes and information. Sure worth a try!!

BASIC TIPS FOR BEGINNING DULCIMER PLAYERS

—H— by Holly Tannen —H—

On this my second visit to Britain, I'm continuing to discover that the dulcimer situation here is similar to that in the States. Many instruments just hang on walls or lie around in little quilted bags. How come? My guess is that at least part of the problem lies in the way dulcimers are sold. "This instrument is so easy that anyone (unspoken: even a simpleton like you) can play it." Thus programmed, when the prospective player runs into her first problems, she's embarrassed to ask for assistance.* So I'd like to share here some typical problems my students in California have had, and the solutions we've come up with.

*Note: I'm here consciously following the radical psychiatry people in Berkeley in substituting "she" for "he" as the active pronoun. 80-90% of my students have been women, and one of the most common barriers we run into is their tendency to see themselves as passive creatures unable to act. This is reinforced by our speech and thought patterns. Becoming aware of it is a first step to passing through it. H.T. -

1. THE INSTRUMENT ITSELF

A. PEGS. Wooden friction pegs - those black violin pegs that many dulcimers have - can work if & only if they, and the holes they're fitted to, are perfectly round. If yours stick or slip, they aren't. Chalk, spit, or peg dope (available at violin stores) are temporary solutions. I personally hate friction pegs & push my students to get good banjo or guitar geared pegs. If this is not possible, I suggest finding the best woodworker you know to round off your pegs and peg holes.

B. STRINGS. "How old are those strings?" "They were brand-new when I bought it six months ago!"

Changing strings is difficult at first, but it is absolutely necessary. It doesn't work to attempt to play on dead strings. It sounds awful & cuts hell out of your fingers. You can expect to have to change your strings every month or so. Be willing, also, to experiment with strings of different gauges. Don't take anyone else's opinion as gospel as to what is the best stringing system. Your instrument is personal & unique. Finding your own favorite tunings & stringing systems is an enjoyable & continuing process. I tune my bass (26 or 32 gauge, bronze wound) to low D; my middle and Melody strings (10 or 12 gauge) to high D. I never use four strings, by the way; if I had separate strings I wouldn't have enough fingers to fret them all; the double melody string that many people use I find too hard on my fingers.

C. EXTRA FRET. An extra fret, between the sixth & seventh frets & named by Howie Mitchell the "6½" fret, is a valuable addition to any dulcimer. In my tuning described above, it allows me to play in a major scale (Ionian mode) or mixolydian mode without retuning.

2. PLAYING POSITION

A generally neglected but very important facet of dulcimer playing. If your body is twisted or constricted, the music will not flow freely. Two positions work for me: a semi-lotus, cross-legged position on the floor or on a cushion, and sitting in a low chair, knees wide apart & feet flat on the ground. If my chair is too high & my heels come off the ground, tension runs through the backs of my calves & my legs start to shake. This is why you'll often see me on stage with my dulcimer case under my feet. Sometimes I play with my right ankle on my left knee & the dulcimer resting on my right leg, but this position doesn't seem to hold up well under the stress of performing. I find that when I'm working best I'm sitting straight, feet grounded, with seventh (octave) fret in line with my spine. I feel then in balance, and the music that happens is balanced. I can't force this, however; it has to spring organically from a centered state of mind.

3. LEFT HAND

Beginners often tend to play with just one finger, or tentatively with two. I encourage my students to play with the thumb & the finger next to the little finger - see illustration. This method allows you to hammer-on & pull-off, and to clamber rapidly up & down the fretboard, (Lon Cole of Los Angeles calls this the "itay-bitay spider method of playing") and to keep your middle fingers free for chording on the middle & bass strings.



(20)

CONTINUED →

4. RIGHT HAND

The right hand creates the rhythms, and developing a fluid sense of rhythm is often a hurdle for students. It's primarily a matter of listening to Appalachian music, fiddle & banjo music, as well as dulcimers, and getting those mountain rhythms into your blood. My friend Bob Thomas the piper says that each culture incorporates into its music the most exciting sounds in its environment. Before the introduction into the U.S. of the railroad train, horses were the most exciting thing going. The basic "bom-biddy-bomp" rhythm that Jean Ritchie describes in her Dulcimer Book is the rhythm of a galloping horse.

CONCLUSIONS

The dulcimer is in many ways a simple instrument; the basics can be learned in an hour. Finding one's own personal style on the instrument is a process that takes time, intense concentration, and a willingness to ask for assistance and to take correction.

(About the Author - Holly Tannen has recently left San Francisco bay area to come and live in London. She has been playing dulcimer for 12 years & teaching professionally for 3. A chapter on her style of playing entitled "Playing Dulcimer with other Instruments" is included in Jean Ritchie's new book Dulcimer People. Holly can be heard on Berkeley Farms (Folkways) & Kenny Hall (Philo). Holly also has had published in the DPN (Vol. 1, No. 4 - reprints available) an article entitled "My Style of Dulcimer Playing")

Eisteddfod '75

September 19, 20, & 21 have been duly recorded as a great weekend of meaningful music making on the campus of Southeastern Massachusetts Univ. where the 1975 Eisteddfod (Welsh for folk festival) was held. Dulcimers of all kinds, both mountain & hammered, were in evidence aplenty, and some really fun people brought a lot of good music with them.

Featured at this gathering was a Mountain Dulcimer Workshop with Margaret MacArthur, Lorraine Lee, and Irene Saletan. These fine ladies, who have about 40 or so years of dulcimer experience between them, conducted the workshop in a really excellent and meaningful manner; inviting and answering questions, sharing tips, explaining various styles, and generally directing a worthy group learning experience - which is what workshops should be all about!!

"TRAPEZOID", the Hammer Dulcimer String Band, comprised of Sam Rizzetta, Paul Riesler, Pete Vigour, and Paul Yeaton, provided yet another workshop feature for hammer dulcimer to make it a well rounded dulcimer weekend. This well attended event was another good learning experience, and much evidence of, and interest in, the instrument was noted throughout the weekend. Fred Montague, a luthier from Tewksbury, Mass., was also at the fest and displayed both hammered and plucked dulcimers at his crafts booth.

The D.P.N. will be running some great photos in the next issue of the dulcimering highlights at the Eisteddfod taken by Tally Frothingham.

P.M.

Hello dulcimer people!

I was so excited to have been shown your dulcimer news. I recently spent a week in Camden, Maine with my in-laws. They told me that there was a dulcimer maker in Eastport who had a booth at the Rockland Seafood Fest. I went down to see him and exchange some information etc. His name is Allen Harris - such beautiful dulcimers! During our conversation he gave me a copy of the last issue which I proceeded to read from cover to cover.

I've been playing dulcimer for 3½ years and have been teaching about 2. The first time I heard one was on the Richard & Mimi Farina albums and decided right then and there that I had to have one. I had been playing with modal tunes for years on the guitar, and when I discovered the dulcimer it was love at first sound. It was a frustrating year-long wait until I had one, but it was worth it. Pitt Kinsolving in New Canaan, Conn. made mine, and I've met only 3 or 4 other craftsmen that do as good a job as he did.

Most of my dulcimer tunes are instrumental and of my own composition. I use as many different techniques and tunings as I can dream up - coming up with some strange things sometimes. Some instruments that I find extremely compatible with the dulcimer are clarinet, viola, and vibes - I'm mostly into the jazz area of music.

Anyway, I'm just thrilled at the wealth of information in D.P.N. and am glad to see dulcimer players and makers banding together...

Barbara Truex
24 Branchville Road
Ridgefield, Conn. 06877



PHOTO COLLATION OF A DULCIMER BUILDER

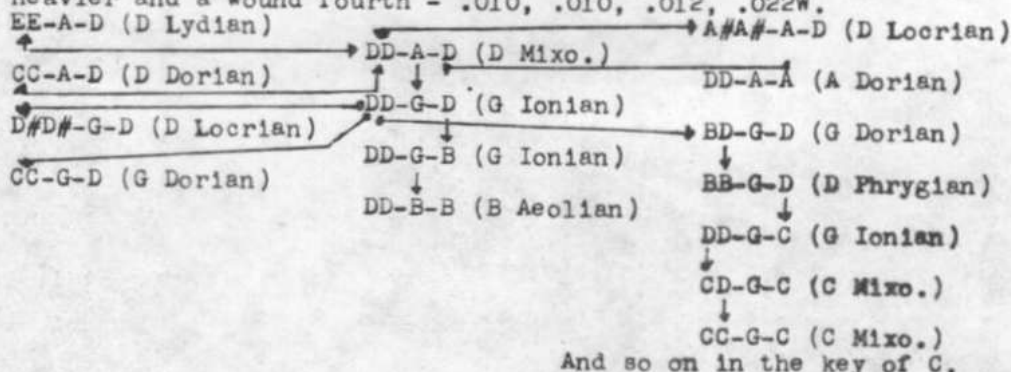
Top left - using chisel to trim top & back even with sides. Center left - tool rack. Bottom left - finished dulcimer showing the use of the capo under the arches. Top right - bending form for shaping sides. Bottom right - Bonnie Carol, relaxing in her shop.

The above photo shows off parts of the dulcimer construction process at Bonnie Carol Dulcimers (Wallstreet, Salina Star Route, Boulder, Colo. 80302). We will be running more of Bonnie's fine photos in future issues, and they speak pretty much for themselves. Anyhow, they sure reflect the fact that she builds dulcimers in a very craftsmanship like manner, and we thank her for sharing her dulcimanian with us.

QUICK TUNE CHART FOR VARIOUS FOUR STRING DULCIMERS

by Neal Hellman

Type i Dulcimer: Where the first two (pair) are the same, the third a little heavier and a wound fourth - .010, .010, .012, .022W.



Type ii Dulcimer : Where strings 1,2 and 3 are the same gauge and the fourth a wound bass string : .014,.014-.014-.022W.

AA-D-D (D Ionian)
 AA-A-D (D Ionian) or: FF-A-D (D Phyrign) or: BbBb-A-D (D Lorcian)
 AA-A-E (A Mix. Rev.) or: AA-A-A (A Bagpipe)
 AA-B-E (Em Dorian)
 AA-B-F# (Bm Aeolian Rev.) (And so on for the Key of E,G,F...etc.)

Flat picking "The Swallowtail Jig" on the Dulcimer

This piece is played in a Reverse Aeolian Key. Tune your first pair to where it feels good. Tune the middle to the first fret on the first pair and the bass to the fourth fret of the middle string. You should end up with AA-B-F# or a transposition thereof. Use a small flexible flatpick and play the individual notes where you see them and strum all the chords. Learned from Margret Mac.Arthur.

3 0 0 0 0 4 0 0 0 0 4 3 5 3 0 0
 4 3 3 2 0 0 0 0 7 7 3 2 3
 4 0 0 0 0 4 5 5 3 0 0 0 5 0 0 0 0 0 5
 3 7 7 3 2 3 3 5 5 5 7 8 9 8 9 8 7 5 5 5
 0 0 0 0 5 0 0 0 0 0 5 3 0 0 0
 7 8 9 8 7 5 4 5 5 5 7 8 9 8 9 8 7 5 7 3 2 3 3

Written in honor of the first "Pacific Rim Dulcimer Festival" August 1975. Written out by Neal J. Hellman with help from Rick Scott, Randy C. Rain, John Frisland and a cast of thousands.



NOTE: Neal has a new address now. It is: Neal Hellman
 30545 Gunn Ave.
 Mission City, B.C.,
 Canada

The next D.P.N. issue will carry another tune in tablature by Neal Hellman and his report on the Pacific Rim Dulcimer Fest. Many thanks to Neal for his many fine contributions to D.P.N. !!
 The musical notation for "Swallowtail Jig" will be found elsewhere within this issue in conjunction with hammered dulcimer tunes.

Dear Mr. Mason,

I've just recieved my first copy of your publication and am trying to rush some info to you on hammered dulcimers.

I have been making them for almost 3 years to date and have completed 8 instruments. The dulcimer in the foreground of the photo measures 42" on long side, and I feel it is a good size for a "standard size" model. My smallest is 28" and largest is 48". The small model was a little bit too "tinkley" for my liking, while the larger ones naturally had more bass and a lot more carrying power.

Different guages of strings and a variety of materials used for the hammers has a lot to do with tonal qualities and textures. On the 42" model I have used #7 and #8 steel wire, #6-#8 brass wire, and #4-#2/0 steel. The heavier guages of steel wire produce a full, bell-like, tone when attacked with a felt hammer. When a wooden hammer is used on the same string a harsher, more biting tone is produced. The brass string also produces a bell-like tone with felt hammers, but seems to lack the power of steel - it is, however, a little more refined. Wood on brass I think sounds terrible. The thinner guages of wire I find to be the most pleasing. With both felt and wood hammers they both produce a good "crisp" tone - one more subdued than the other. Naturally, it is impossible, if not ridiculous, to try to describe a sound of any sort. If you own an instrument and are ambitious enough to restring a few courses, maybe you can draw your own conclusions.

As far as construction goes, I find that plywood makes a good, sturdy box in most cases (if harpsichord makers can do it, why not dulcimer makers?). A good veneer job does wonders for the ugliness which plywood makes up for in strength. For internal bracing I use two horizontal and two vertical (one vertical if just treble courses). I use cherry pin-blocks because of its relative hardness and also because it makes a nice color contrast with the walnut veneered cases - which seem to be one of my invariables.

Soundboards are usually touchy subjects when it comes to arguing about the quality of different instruments. I have found birch plywood to be very good for dulcimers. A quality piece of spruce would produce too much resonance on an instrument which has no dampening mechanism. Plywood, which has no outstanding resonant properties, fulfills the act of dampening the hammered dulcimer, yet gives good tone upon initial attack of the hammers.

As far as bridges go, I have found that the common bridges on most dulcimers (a single piece of wood on treble instruments, on instruments with bass courses holes are drilled through to allow passage of strings) to be more trouble than they are worth. They make stringing the dulcimer much harder that it should be, and playing with solid bridges is much more confusing. To overcome these hardships, I make one bridge for each course of strings. After the entire dulcimer is strung they can be slid into place. For the first note of each major scale I use one color of wood, first note of a minor gets a different color; the rest have a different color. It's not completely like painting by number, but does have its advantages in finding an accidental stuck in some far away place.

I would be interested in hearing from other dulcimer makers who have any information to share. I would also like to hear from dulcimer customers who have something to give. Prices are available upon request.

Thank you for your time, James D. "Phineas" Martin

RFD 3

Gorham, Maine 04038

NOTE: After having taught a course for 6 years at the University of Maine on making and playing the Appalachian dulcimer, Phineas has now gone on to pursue an independent major in musical instrument construction. This major is self-designed and offered under the auspices of the College of Arts and Sciences. See the photo of his dulcimers in the next issue. OUR BIG 1ST ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!!



THE MARY RHOADS INSTRUCTIONAL ALBUM



— by Fred Montague —

Here are some thoughts I have on a record I recently purchased. The record is on the French label "le chant du monde" No. LDX 74485; the title is "Le Dulcimer Special Instrumental" by Mary Rhodes.

As indicated in the liner notes (which are in French, but a translation is included) Mary Rhodes is a native of Pennsylvania who has been living in France. She has been playing dulcimer for about 10 years.

The cuts are almost all traditional tunes well known to most, and for the most part are played in a traditional manner. Occasionally you may detect something in the rhythm that smacks of Europe during the middle ages, but that may be just my interjection. What really sets this record apart from other recordings of folk music is the detailed explanation of how the music is played and how the instrument is tuned. As a matter of fact I picked it out from the "Instrument Instruction" section of a record shop. As an instruction record, unlike the Jean Ritchie disc, there is no talking on the record itself so that you can just enjoy the music for its own sake. For example, just listen to "Over the Waterfall", very traditional in both playing & instrumental approach and compare this to "Herod & the Cock" in which the dulcimer is bowed.

Another approach to dulcimer playing is heard on "Where the Flowers are Blooming Forever". Here she uses a chopstick falling on the strings to get the melody line. My favorite cuts are "Will the Circle be Unbroken" in which she plays without the lyrics & uses a traditional, but not often heard, tuning. This tuning is called the N.B.C. tuning after the tones used years ago by that radio network. On this cut Mary uses a double thumbing technique on the dulcimer & plays with a banjo; the beautiful lilting quality that is achieved is truly something else. The other cut I especially like is "Nonesuch", in which we hear our Appalachian dulcimer along with it's older French cousin the epinette. It is wonderful to hear the weaving through the melody of these two related instruments. Another interesting cut is her playing of "Simple Gifts", again as an instrumental only. Here she uses three different techniques - two kinds of strumming and a fingerpicking style.

As I said before, this record is truly an instructional record that truly features the dulcimer and illustrates well it's various possibilities. The liner notes are really good as well as informative, and there is also a tablature included for 5 of the album cuts. The only criticism I would have is that no credit is given for the other performers. But, except for that, this is one truly fine album & worthy of a place in every record library of folk music.

F. M.

NOTE: Fred tells us that "I understand that the artist, Mary Rhodes, is selling the record herself. I bought my copy at Briggs & Briggs in Cambridge. Here is her address so your readers in other parts of the country can find out how to get one should they so desire." Mary Rhoads, Center Valley, PA 18034.

Fred Montague is a dulcimer (both kinds) builder friend of the DPN and we will be running some photos of his fine dulcimers in the next issue (not expensive either). If your in Fred's area do stop in and see his Shop - he'd be happy to sell you a dulcimer too! He's located at 16 Patriot Road, Tewksbury, Mass. 01876.

HAMMERED DULCIMER BUILDER - David Usher (Usher's Dulcimers, 216 N. Elm, Webster Groves, Missouri 63119) has been building hammered dulcimers for the past two years and has only recently begun offering them for sale. The development of these instruments is the result of a lot of work at no profit and Dave says the tone is clean, rich, and voluminous across the entire range of the instrument. Please write to Dave for further info and literature on these instruments. His spec sheet lists quite a variety of high quality woods (no-plywoods either) too.

**** There is a new publication (monthly) out called "OLD-TIME MUSIC GAZETTE" (\$5.00/year). This publication is fast gaining national attention for its coverage of old time music and its features on musical instruments of the folk tradition. Individual copies are 50¢, and Vol. 1, No. 3 contained a feature on the Appalachian dulcimer, while Vol. 1, No. 1 contained an article on the hammered dulcimer. Write c/o Julia Littleton-Taylor, Editor, Box 5, Lincolnville, Maine 04849.

THE SOLDIER'S JOY

— By Roger Nicholson —

'Soldier's Joy' is one of the best known country dance tunes and probably the most played by folk musicians ranging from pipe bands to bluegrass groups. Of English origin the evidence of its popularity is that it is also widespread in Ireland, Scotland, Norway, Canada, and America.

Thomas Hardy, the 19th Century writer, was a fiddler in his youth like his father and their tune books are kept in the library of the English Folk Dance and Song Society in London. Most of Hardy's stories are set in the Dorset countryside where he lived and contain many references to traditional music, in particular the novel, 'Far from the Maddening Crowd' which has this to say about 'Soldier's Joy':

"And so the dance began. As to the merits of 'The Soldier's Joy' there cannot be, and never were, two opinions. It has been observed in the musical circles of Weatherbury and its vicinity that this melody, at the end of three-quarters of an hour of thunderous footing, still possesses more stimulative properties for the heel and toe than the majority of other dances at their first opening. 'The Soldier's Joy' has, too, an additional charm in being so admirably suited to the tambourine - no mean instrument in the hands of a performer who understands the proper convulsions, spasms, St. Vitus dances and fearful frenzies necessary when exhibiting its tones in their highest perfection.

So the immortal tune ended with a fine D rolling forth from the bass-viol with the sonorosity of a cannonade....."

This reel is a natural dulcimer tune and can be played in either the Ionian or Mixolydian modes. The following tablature is a double-thumbing arrangement in the Ionian mode, the right hand thumb alternating between the first and second strings while the index finger plays the third. The left hand plays part chords, which bring some melody notes onto the second string, plus hammer-ons and pull-offs.

What was the Soldier's Joy? Most sources agree that it refers to 'payday'.

arr. Roger Nicholson

IONIAN MODE

QUICKLY

THE SOLDIER'S JOY

①

4	7	7-5	5	7-5	5	7-10	10	7-5	5	7-5	5
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

②

6-4	4	0	7-5	5	7-5	7-10	10	11	12	11	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

③

10	10	3-5	7	4	6	3-5	7	6	4	4	4
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

④

3-5	7	4	6	5	4	3	2	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

SEQUENCE AABBB

A LINKING BRACKET BETWEEN TWO NOTES INDICATES A HAMMER-ON OR PULL-OFF.

Dear Phil,

..... Came back from a short holiday in Paris last week, while there I saw an old friend, Robert Rongier, who is going to write something on the French epinette de Vosges for you. There is a great interest in the dulcimer in the French folk world and a growing list of makers & players. Our record dates have been put back a few weeks to late November which is just as well as it gives us more time. For me this is the last one and I want it to be the best too so the extra weeks will be useful in trying to get everything just right. I understand it will be released in February next year and called "Times and Traditions for Dulcimer". ..

All best wishes, Roger Nicholson
34 Victoria Court
Kingsbridge Avenue
London W.3., England

P.S. Future articles will be a comparison between the dulcimer and sitar; and after that I have in mind a short tuition series on fingerstyle playing techniques.

Dear D.P.N. -

I make cases for non-standard instruments such as dulcimers, etc. I am not a mass producer. I work off the homestead that I am trying to develop and make from 8 to 12 cases a month, depending on size & complexity. RICK LILLARD, Custom Casemaker, Rt. 2, Box 28, Stuart, OK 74570. Please write for more info. Finest materials only used in these cases.

*****SMALL DEALERS (BIG ONES TOO!) NOTE: Lee & Jean Schilling at Jean's Dulcimer Shop (P.O. Box 8, Cosby, Tenn. 37722) are working in earnest towards becoming dealers distributors (regular wholesale) for a wide variety of dulcimer books, records, and related accessories. This means a great savings in time and energy for the small lot dealer who will be able to order a wide selection of materials from one source instead of the usual many. If you are interested in what the Schillings can offer now, as well as what they are working towards, then do drop them a line. They would also be most interested in suggestions on what to carry as well as sources for new or interesting materials, etc. Lee tells me that ... "we're going to bend over backwards to cater to small dealers who want to get a large variety without tying up a lot of money in a lot of copies." (Good for builders to have a stock of books too for festival & craft booths, etc). Nice folks here too! They continue to do much good work to help further the dulcimer and it's music.

***** CORRECTION TO LAST ISSUE: I have had a few "errata" called to my attention - in the TODPCIM review from $\frac{1}{2}$ Lyre in Vol. 1, No. 6 - by Betty Round, Grandville, Mich.

- (1) 'Twas JAY ROUND - not Jonathan who played HD at Chet's funeral.
- (2) Patty Looman is the Pontiac teacher - not 'Luan' as I mahoganally put it.
- (3) (Ed. note: Jay Round has also pointed out to me that the correct abbreviation of the Club is O.D.P.C., Inc., not T.O.D.P.C.I.M.)
-Carolyn Montgomery

P.S.
Saw new H.D. hammers
made from a "knot hole" -

and covered with "kid" strips.
Oh those knotty kids!

P.S. #2 - Why doesn't someone write an article about bass strings - to be or not to be - are they worth the extra trouble to build in or do only virtuosos use them??

Dear Friends

..... We are opening in a new location as of Sept. 1st. You'll find us at the N.E. corner of the State. Come on by!

The H.D. Catalogue was excellent - we have all Lyrichord listings - Adelphi too! We have Chinese & American H.D.s and have plans for H.D.s Excellent tuning wrenches too in star & square recess. We have Scott's Plans & Dennis Dorogi American H.D. Let us know if we can be of some help. (Write for catalog). Sincerely, Spike Hopkins

HOUSE OF MUSICAL TRADITIONS, BERKELEY SPRINGS, W. VA 25411
(Formerly 7040 Carroll Ave., Takoma Park, Maryland)

Dear Phil,

..... So far as I know the only importer of the Japanese dulcimer is: Coast Wholesale Music Co., 274 Brannan St., San Francisco, CA 94107. They do sell to other distributors in the U.S. so perhaps people could write and find out. I'll try this end and let you know.

Enclosed find a "flyer" on the langeleik. Perhaps the readers of D. P. N. would like to write and have one sent from Norway. I think I paid about \$65.00 or so including postage.

Regards, Dave Mollis
1122 Hawthorne
S.F., Calif. 94402

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TUNING THE NORWEGIAN ZITHER

With the help of a concert pitch instrument such as a piano, accordion or the like, the Norwegian Zither can be tuned in the following way:

Strings no. 1, 2, 3 and 4 are tuned alike in C (see figure). String no. 5, the bass, is also tuned in C, but an octave lower. Strings no. 6, 7 and 8 should be tuned as a triad in C. Any triad can be chosen as one wishes, but the original tuning was to tune string no. 8 lowest in G, no. 7 in C and no. 6 in E.

If wanted one can tune the instrument from A or H, as it is easier played when tuned lower.

If the Norwegian Zither is to be tuned without the help of other instruments, it is done as follows:

Strings no. 1, 2, 3 and 4 are tuned alike, no. 5 the same but an octave lower. Strings no. 6, 7 and 8 are tuned with the help of the four white pyramids. The placing of pyramids A, B and C is shown in the illustration. String no. 8 is tuned by holding at point D. String no. 8 should then give the same note as string no. 1. Similarly, string no. 7 is tuned by holding at point E and string no. 6 by holding at F.

To play a plectrum is used at the bottom of the instrument. The melody is only played on the first string. The others are only sounding strings to give timbre. By way of illustration, it can be mentioned that the scale is played by placing the fingers of the left hand between the frets on the first string; with the plectrum held in the right hand one plays on the string.

The Norwegian Zither is built on the principle of the natural scale and has no half tones.

Finally, we wish to congratulate you on possessing a very special instrument and hope that you will gain pleasure from it.

Best wishes

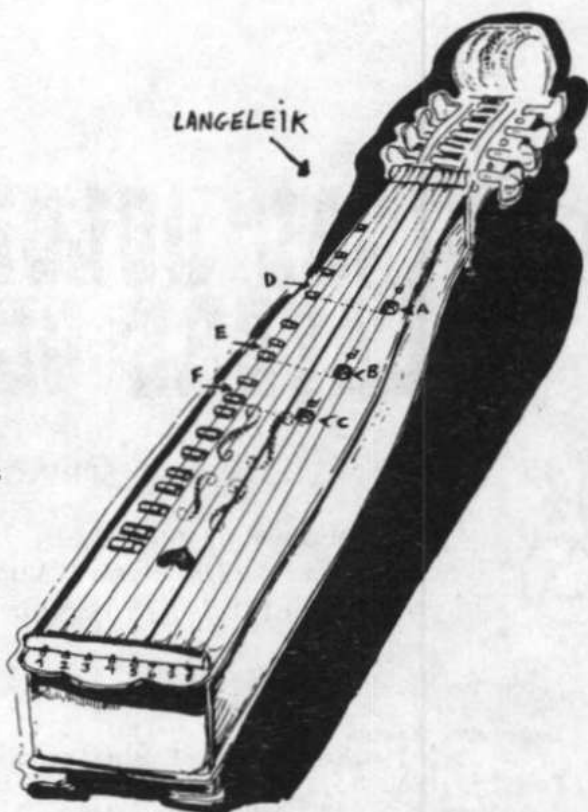
RUDI A/S

RUDI A/S

Tidl. K. Ø. Rudi & Søn

2940 HEGGENES - TLF. 2
NORWAY

Vilhelm



Dear Dulcimer Playing Friends-

..... I play dulcimer & langeleik, among other stringed instruments, and have always felt a growing love and respect for both instruments. The langeleik, a probable ancestor of the dulcimer, should be of great interest to your D.P.N. readers. A dulcimer can be played langeleik-style, and some of my best dulcimer playing has been done this way I'm glad you're interested in a langeleik article - Boris Borisoff and I will probably co-author one. He knows a lot more about the instrument than I do but writing in English is extremely tedious work for him.

To the best of my knowledge there are only three people in the Western hemisphere who play Valdres langeleik - Sonia Sevig (who I'm trying to get in touch with - anyone know her whereabouts?) Boris Borisoff, and myself. I'll be sending you some playing techniques for dulcimer that might be of interest.

Simon Spaulding
566 Chestnut St.
San Francisco, CA 94133

P.S. Michael Rugg, of CapriTaurus Instruments, is not only a fine instrument builder but one of the very finest dulcimer players on the West coast. If he has'nt already been discussed in your publication, he should be.

Dear Phil-

If you have room I would appreciate your mentioning the fact that myself & several other dulcimer people were disappointed that there was no dulcimer workshop at this year's Philadelphia Folk Festival. In past years there has traditionally been a dulcimer workshop and one portion of the festival site is even named "The Dulcimer Grove". I am writing to the Phil. Folk Song Society; 7113 Emlen St., Phila., PA 19119 and I will request that next year's festival include a dulcimer workshop. If you could suggest that all readers of D.P.N. who would like to see a workshop next year write also I think it would be a bit more effective.

DAN RICH
99 E FRANKLIN AVE.
New Castle, DE 19720

ORIGINAL DULCIMER PLAYERS CLUB, INC.



- NEXT SPRING -

The meeting on May 1, 1976 will be held at the Old Town Hall in Bridgeport, Mi., just off I-75 - South of Saginaw.



Dear Mr. Mason -

.... Is there any information in back issues about the Roscoe Russell Family? (Ed. No, who's got some?) Are they any relation to an old time dulcimer builder named Sam Russell of Marion, Virginia? I found one of Mr. Russell's instruments in the music library at Berry College, dated August 10, 1933. It's now in the Martha Berry Museum - I strung it up and it's in completely playable condition. Some of the old wire-staple frets are somewhat out of tune; however, the tone is a very nice sharp traditional sound. I believe the wood is yellow poplar.

Do you know of any pickers who would be interested in swapping some tunes? There's a real dearth of player's around here, so I guess my contacts will have to be pretty much by mail. I've done some transcriptions of several Richard Farina tunes & many fiddle tunes.

Thanks, Doug Murray
1013 N. 5th Ave., Apt C.
Rome, Georgia 30161

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Catalogue 25¢

Dear Phil,

... I really look for a resurgence of interest in hammered dulcimers in the next few years. All the things you say in your brochure are true, and as more people get to see these instruments their popularity will increase. I think the simplicity of the instrument and its tuning needs to be stressed, as the large number of strings and the off-center bridges are suggestive of a complexity which does not actually exist. I found that I had a little trouble figuring out the tuning until I got Howie's book - and then it became much more clear. So, if it is presented right there should be no problem.

... I have a tape of music played on the Langeleik, made in Norway by an 19 year old girl who is quite talented. If anyone is interested, I will buy tape & copy this one & send it out for \$6.00 each - \$4.00 for the tape, postage, and trouble, and \$2.00 for the Norwegian student. The tape will be a cassette, and will run approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Jack Moe, M.D.
Flying Things
3500 Lafayette Road
Indianapolis, IN 46222



On Chords

— by Eileen Rains —

I'd like to explain a little of my thinking about chords. Much of our written music today is designed for either piano alone or has chords for guitar above the music. Fine. Some songbooks have chords only (Folk-singers Wordbook) - quite helpful. But people are faced with a song in a key they can't sing to - me for instance - I can't always hit the highest notes in a Key of C Major song - and can't sing low enough to drop my voice an octave. In such an instance, a person is faced with several alternatives - drop the "do" note if strumming - fine - but chording won't work that way. Retune like with your chart on pg 30 of your book (Dulcimer Players Bible) - good, but you're retuning. Retune to another mode - re-tuning again. Give up and don't sing the song - never - well, almost never. BUT, WHY NOT STAY IN THE SAME IONIAN TUNING? Change your basic chords & either drop your voice or bring it up. Of course, this doesn't work in all keys - I've only done these three and that seems to be plenty. ITS THE RELATIONSHIPS THAT COUNT - not whether or not the Dulcimer can play a low F on its melody string...so what! The instrument is your servant - you control it. So, you can change a C chord to a G or F chord; change the G7 to a D7 or C7 whichever key. The following is an "Easy Chord" illustration for The Wildwood Flower - I'll assume everyone knows it in either the new words or the old. It helps to know the tune, of course.

Figure out which note up from the "do" tone is the starting note - in Wildwood Flower it's the third. Without music, you need to pick out the tune a bit on the melody string.

Key of C - first note is E - 5th fret melody string

Key of F - " " A - 1st or 8th " "

Key of G - " " B - 2nd or 9th " "

Then off you go. The best part about it is - it works! I'm talking about easy chording - not anything elaborate - simply that some songs sound better with chording than without. Just as some sound better strummed than plucked---it all depends.

The E Minor and A Minor won't work all the way through - I'm still experimenting with them and have several songs with lots of minor chords that sound good, but they were worked out according to a hit and miss system rather than by proper 1-2-3 and the next is 4 type of thinking. For instance, I play the House Carpenter with Am, G, etc. (Like it better strummed w/chords than in Aeolian).

You might want to say a word in your paper about the Irregardless Restraunt here in Raleigh - a health food restraint - delicious food, by the way - any-way, that's where I play a few evenings a month. All kinds of music being played there - Paul Gabriel plays a lot of East Indian-type of Dulcimer music - very good.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE →

IONIAN MODE CHORDS FOR THE WILDWOOD FLOWER

Arrangement for dulcimer by Eileen Rains

KEY OF C MAJOR

1st line -	C	G7	C
Fingers on frets #	4	3	2
	3	0	0
	5	4	3
2nd line -	repeat 1st line C G7 C		
3rd line -	C	F	C
	0	0	0
	5	6	5
	7	8	7
4th line -	repeat 1st line C G7 C		

KEY OF F MAJOR

1st line -	F	C7	F	*Switch positions of index & thumb.
	5*	6*	5*	
	3	3	3	
	6	5	6	
2nd line -	repeat 1st line F C7 F			
3rd line -	F	B	F	
	5	6	5	
	3	4	3	
	6	6	6	
4th line -	repeat 1st line F C7 F			

KEY OF G MAJOR

1st line -	G	D7	G
	1	1	1
	0	1	0
	2	4	2
2nd line -	repeat 1st line G D7 G		
3rd line -	G	C	G
	4	4	4
	2	3	2
	4	5	4
4th line -	repeat 1st line G D7 G		

WILDWOOD FLOWER

Traditional

C-F-G 67-C7-D7 C-F-G
I'll entwine and I'll mingle my waving (color) hair,
C-F-G 67-C7-D7 C-F-G
With the roses so red, and the lilies so fair.
C-F-G F-B-C C-F-G
My eyes will outshine the stars in the blue,
C-F-G 67-C7-D7 C-F-G
Said I, knowing not, that my love was untrue.
ETC, ETC.



Dear Phillip,

..... I have been making dulcimers for about 1½ years now. I am also making bluegrass & frailing banjos. It began out of a project while I was in College studying ethnomusicology. Well, I built a dulcimer for a class & haven't stopped since.

My shop is presently located on the Illinois river north of Peoria, Ill. on Route 29.

The dulcimer is not very well known around here, so I have taken it upon myself to introduce it to as many people as possible. I could use a little help, so if there are any readers of D.P.N. in my area please come & visit me (I haven't been in Peoria long & don't know many people). I would also like to get involved in researching regional folklore & folk song.

I make your basic models of dulcimers - two hourglass & two teardrop with a choice of various hardwoods. My standard models are of H. Mahogany or Walnut with either Cedar or Spruce soundboards. Price starts at \$50 plus shipping.

Again, thanks for your invitation to write and best of luck with D.P.N. You have my full support!!

"Thanks much"

Paul Adams

Riverfront Dulcimers
c/o Sea Way Marina-Box 3434
7012 N Galena Rd.
Peoria, Ill. 61614

August 4, 1975

Dear Phil:

IN response to your request for information on the hammered dulcimer I have compiled this for the D.P.N. You may use it or any part of it for publication as you see fit.

* * * * *

HISTORY

The ancient origins of the hammered dulcimer seem to be somewhere in the Near East about 4000 years ago. The Greek psalterion was probably one of the earliest instruments. The name 'dulcimer' comes from the Latin "dulce" and the Greek "melos", which, together mean "sweet tune". The dulcimer is mentioned in the Bible, in Daniel, and evidence points to the 'hammered' type and nothing else. Through the centuries the dulcimer was introduced to Europe (in the late 12th century in Spain), later into Asia (Ukraine, Uzbek) and much later to the Orient. Some of the countries where the dulcimer was played (& still is) and the name of the instrument in that country are: China - yangch'in, Korea in the 18th C. - yangum, India - santur, ancient Persia - kanun, now called santir, Greece today - santouri, Hungary - cimbalom, Rumania - tambal, Uzbek (USSR) - chang, Italy - dolcimela, and Wales - dwysmel!!

The dulcimer had been in England by 1400 as can be seen in a carving in Manchester Cathedral. By the 18th C. the dulcimer had established itself in court and countryside, and even factories produced them in the 19th. The dulcimer was brought to the colonies in America where it became popular in street bands. Except in East Anglia, the dulcimer had declined in England and in America by the time of WWI, apparently replaced by the piano, accordion or whatever.

The instrument seemed lost, isolated pockets of players were all that remained, until the most recent of the 'folk revivals' came along in the last decade. The hammered dulcimer is making a steady comeback as more and more people discover its unique tone and versatility. It is now a member of many country dance bands, since this kind of music is delightful to play on the dulcimer. It is also used as accompaniment to the singing of folk songs.

The dulcimer is still a tourist attraction in the Alps under its German name of 'hackbrett'. A bibliography of hammered & plucked (Appalachian) dulcimers can be obtained by writing the Library of Congress, Music Division, Wash., D.C. 20540.

The Problem Of Names

I would like to clear up the confusion caused by two different instruments having the same name - dulcimer. The hammered dulcimer was traditionally called 'dulcimer', as I mentioned earlier. The instrument we call the Appalachian Dulcimer came from completely different roots and developed along different lines! I believe it came from Scandinavia, where similar looking instruments like the Norwegian 'langeleik' were common. The Appalachian dulcimer was then apparently

brought here by early immigrants. How it aquired the name 'dulcimer', I don't know. To allieviate the problem somewhat, the original dulcimer acquired the name- hammer(ed) dulcimer, and has remained as such.

Construction

Basic construction of dulcimers is the same around the world. The traditional shape is trapizoidal, although psalteries(like h. dulcimers only plucked with the fingers) tend to be built into rectangular cabinetry. Differences appear in the number of strings per set, or 'course', the number of courses(notes), and the position of the bridges. In America, the treble (left hand) bridge is set up for a 5th interval across itself, giving the traditional 'dance keys' - D, G ,A,C in 15 courses.(see photo) The right hand or bass bridge notes vary according to need. An American dulcimer usually runs 3 octaves diatonically in one key, less in the others. In Europe and Asian instruments, each course of strings has its own separate bridge, chromatic scales and more notes. The Hungarian cimbalom has about 4 chromatic octaves, separate bridges withe different intervals across them, and some strings divided into 3 parts! Dulcimers vary tremendously in craftsmanship and the wood used. They may be quite plain, or handsomely decorated. The hammers themselves differ quite a bit between players and countries.

About myself...

I built my first hammer dulcimer a few years ago having seen one at Fox Hollow Festival. I was so fascinated by the tone and the agility of the players that I had to have one for myself! Learning to play was fairly easy since I'd had music training and played guitar and piano. The hammer dulcimer is relatively easy to learn to play, although the finer points come more slowly as with any instrument. Since then I have builtseveral hammer dulcimers for myself, experimenting with differebt woods for different tones and effects. I have built several instruments on special order for people who contactme. They are built to the contractors specifications and budget. I work out of my residence, of which the contact adress is:

Stringed Instruments
by Jim Gregory
5327 Baynton St.
Phila., Pa. 19144

The music I play is mostly country dance music. I play in a band for a regular country dance night as well as other contracted engagements. I also play at a local Irish Center for ceildh dancing, as well as jamming with fiddlers and the like since the dulcimer is very suited to playing old fiddle tunes. When plucked as a psaltery, the dulcimer goes beautifully together with the Appalachian dulcimer, & vocal numbers. The hammer dulcimer is suited for duets, especially classical compositions.

All over again people are discovering the "sweet tune" of the hammer dulcimer and the fun of playing it. I hope that this instrument, so deeplyrooted in so many cultures once again attains the respected position it has held in the past.

* * * * *

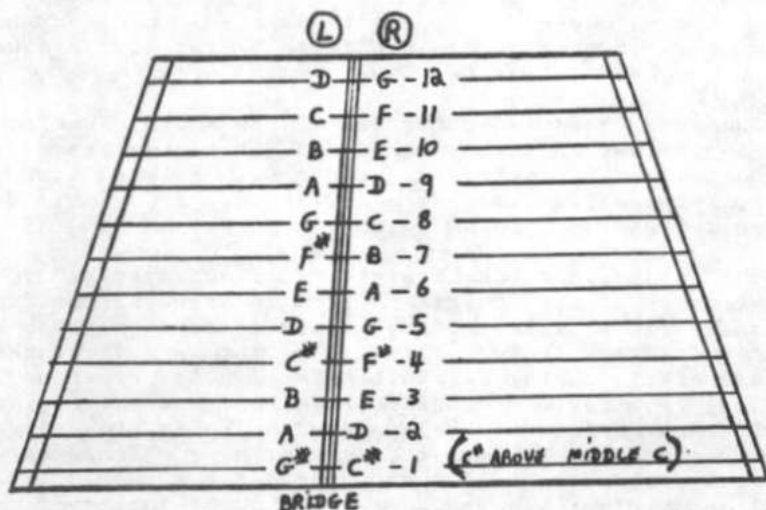
I hope this information can be of use to you.

Jim Gregory

HAMMERED DULCIMER TABLATURES

By Phil Mason

The treble bridge string courses (upon which the majority of h.d. playing is done) of your h.d. will look something like the following diagram:



The string courses are numbered 1 to 12 beginning at the long side of the instrument, in front of which the player usually positions him/herself. Assuming you use the fifth interval tuning scheme (most popular), your string sets (courses) will be tuned as indicated in the diagram above. To indicate a tune in tablature, a little number is simply written above each note to indicate which string course corresponds to each particular note of the music.

**CIRCLED TABLATURE NUMBERS INDICATE LEFT;
AND PLAIN NUMBERS THE RIGHT SIDE OF BRIDGE.**

**TUNE 8 + 9 (C + D) up to C# + D# TO PLAY THE
FOLLOWING FAVORITE IRISH JIG.**

SWALLOW-TAIL JIG

Dear Phillip,

I first saw an Appalachian dulcimer a year ago at Pinkham Notch Camp in New Hampshire, at the foot of Mt. Washington. It was being used along with a banjo, guitar and a fiddle for square dance tunes like "Old Joe Clarke" - and the sound really got to me. I always liked bluegrass, but the dulcimer's music contains a sort of haunting, old sound that no other instrument can duplicate. Then it can sound even funky, depending on what is played.

My brother, Charles, who was backpacking in the Smokey Mtns. soon after, tried to buy a dulcimer in that area but the local craftsmen were backlogged and he was unable to get one for me. We were lucky to find in N. J. a Capri-Taurus kit, and he made me one. It's a big dulcimer, made of spruce and plywood, in an hourglass shape.

After playing that dulcimer, Charles got "dulcimer disease" too and went on to make several more dulcimers from scratch for some friends who also became stricken with the fever. Enclosed is a photo of some of his latest dulcimers. He got a really good tone and resonance and styled some of the features like Lee Shilling's very fine instruments, with help from Howie Mitchell's book, and his engineering training at Stevens Tech. The dove-shaped sound holes in the dulcimer at the left were designed by an artist friend of mine who has taken it with her to Italy, where she will be studying for a year. Maybe we'll get some Italian dulcimer players now - that ought to provide some interesting new sounds!

The dulcimer has such a never-ending array of musical effects, I love to play all kinds of music with it - from Richard Farina's style to Frank Proffitt's, or Irish ballads and sea chanteys from the Clancys and Tommy Makem. Also, to do justice to the dulcimer's versatility, I believe in using all different methods of playing - chording or noting (which still gives the best sound on some numbers - even if it's easier to do), finger picking, hammering-on and pulling-off - and I'm anxious to try bowing. It seems to me that while there is much to learn from both tradition and from playing styles currently in vogue, each individual has something different "to say" in his playing, and by going ahead with your own style and by being inventive, you can enhance the instrument's uses and popularity.

I'd love to meet some other people in my area who play the dulcimer, and am always talking about it and trying to get other people interested (which isn't too hard!). If you have the time, could you please let me know if there are subscribers to DPN in N. J.?

Here's something you may know about, but just in case you don't - I was talking to a fellow named Doug Tuchmann, who is the editor of "Pickin'" magazine, and he said one of his fall issues would include an article on the Ozark Dulcimer Works (Arkansas).

Sincerely yours,
Miss Lois C. Hornbostel
251 Central Avenue
Hasbrouck Heights, N.J.
07604



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Phillip Mason
Dulcimer Players News
R-2, Box 132
Bangor, Maine 04401

- UNCLE BOB BRYAN -

401 Roxanne Drive
Raleigh, North Carolina 27603
September 29, 1975

Dear Phil:

I am a "hillbilly" from Marshall N. C. who has been a transplanted Easterner for quite a few years, but my heart will always be in the hills.

I built my first mountain or Appalachian dulcimer more than ten years ago. Had some expert advice too! I met Howie Mitchell through his wife-to-be Marthy, and he got me going on the right track. I began with Howie's floating bridge but am no longer convinced that it adds anything desirable to the instrument.

Anyhow, one completed dulcimer called for two etc. and, first thing I knew I was giving dulcimers to close relatives and selling them to other people. Thus far, I have built more than two hundred and will build even faster now that I have retired.

I do not seek sales on a sight unseen basis, although I will sell them that way. I believe a discussion of the instrument is desirable with the buyer, if possible.

Here in Raleigh, North Carolina, there have been a few dulcimers for many years, but the growth is tremendous now. I like to believe that I had something vital to do with this growth.

I would like to mention two girls who have also had a lot to do with this growth. First there was Audrey Hines, the best traditional dulcimer player and singer I have ever heard. With help and hints from others Audrey taught herself and then she began teaching others.

Audrey has now become an unwilling transplant to Richmond, Virginia. She moans and groans that she can find hardly any dulcimer players there. Hope you Richmond dulcimer players will contact Audrey at 5832 Forest Hills Avenue, Richmond, Virginia, 23225. You'll make her happy again.

The other girl I want to mention is Eileen Rains a Southerner from New Jersey. Eileen was a school teacher in Harlan County, Kentucky where she met her husband, David, who is now a builder here in Raleigh. Eileen purchased her first dulcimer from me about two years ago. She has become the most accomplished overall dulcimer player I have ever seen.

Eileen first learned to play in the traditional fashion, which I think is what everyone should do. Then she started studying chords, picking and strumming. She puts on a big show for all of the people every time she attends a craft fair or other show in this area. Eileen has done more to show people the versatility and completeness of the plucked dulcimer than anybody I know. She truly makes it sing!

One other thing this trip. I have concocted a mixture which I believe will be the answer to slipping pegs on dulcimers, violins and other musical instruments. I package it in small dropper bottles for easy application. When needed (not often) you just apply a drop or two at the point where the peg enters the scroll on each side. Allow about an hour for drying. Pegs will be hard ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~turn~~ the first time so break them loose carefully. Then you will find that you have almost no trouble with slipping strings. Anybody who wants to try a bottle just send \$2.00 to UNCLE BOB'S DULCIMERS, 401 Roxanne Drive, Raleigh, N. C. 27603 and I'll send you a bottle.

If the response to this indicates a wide need for such a material I will begin advertising it in IPN. Incidentally, this material is not messy like chalks and some other things that are used.

That's about it for this trip. I'm enjoying IPN.

Sincerely,

Uncle Bob
Uncle Bob Bryan

DPN SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

The Dulcimer Players News is published semi-monthly (6 issues per year) as a source and information flow magazine on all aspects of the dulcimer, both plucked and hammered, of traditional as well as contemporary interest.

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If you're ever up our way stop in and visit. The D.P.N. office is always open (in the barn over our milk goats) and visitors are welcome to look through our scrap books and materials and listen to our tapes from readers (we just got 2 more nice ones: CapriTaurus String Band, and a left-handed player tape sent in by Tina Walski). We like pickin' singin' and song swappin' - just for the fun of it!

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